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NO. 15.

Maine Farmer.

EZEKIEL HOLMES, Editor.

Our Home, our Country, and our Brother Man.

A chapter on bones.—Phosphate of Lime.

We met our old and sociable friend Capt. Jennings, of North Wayne, the other day, who informed us that he had obtained a lot of bones which he wished to convert into a dressing for his land, and also wished to have published a chapter on the composition of bones in general, and how the phosphate of lime of them. Well, Capt., as to the composition of bones in general, permit us to say that bones are made up of several materials, and these may be divided into animal and earthy, or, in other words, organic and inorganic. The animal or organic materials are the gelatin, or glue, and the fatty or oily matter contained in them. The earthy or inorganic materials are carbonate of lime and phosphate of lime. The good housewife in making soap usually boils out the oil or grease by plunging them into boiling lye. This will sometimes take out a little of the glue, which makes them set somewhat. If you should plunge the bone now, into a vessel containing muriatic acid, the lime will be dissolved out by the acid and the glue left in the shape of the bone in before being placed in the acid. On the other hand, if the bones be placed in the fire, the organic matter, such as the glue and fatty matter, will be burnt up, and the carbonate and phosphate of lime be left in the form of a white sandy ash. This ash consists of carbonate of lime and phosphate of lime. Throw this ash into sulphuric acid diluted with a little water, and this sulphuric acid will rob the carbonate of the portion of lime it held, and drive it off in the shape of bubbles of gas. The mass will then be a mixture of sulphate of lime and phosphate of lime. Sulphate of lime (which is the same as plaster-of-paris) and phosphate of lime, are both good for fertilizing the earth.

Bones, taken as they are found when stripped of flesh, and pounded or ground into bone dust, are more fertilizing, because you not only have the phosphate and carbonate of lime, but also the animal matters, (grease and fat.) But bone dust is not so quick in its operation as phosphate of lime. There are several ways of preparing the phosphate of lime on a large scale. One of which is breaking or grinding the bones and piling them up on a floor or large vat, and pouring upon them sulphuric acid. Letting this act upon them a day or so, then stir up and turn over, and pour on more. Another mode is to burn the bones—pulverize and treat them in the same manner until the whole mass is crumbled down fine. The manufacture of it successfully, requires some practice and experience, and it would be well for a beginner to operate on a small quantity at a time, until he gets familiar with the business. He should then buy his sulphuric acid by the carboy, and not by the spoonful.

If our friend Jennings is desirous of separating a little of the phosphate of lime from the other materials, and seeing how it looks, he can try the following experiment on a small scale. Take a piece of bone and burn it. This will drive off all the organic matter. Then dissolve it in muriatic acid. Then pour into the solution some aqua ammonia. The muriatic acid will leave the lime and unite with the ammonia, and the phosphate of lime will be thrown down in the form of a white powder.

Will this do for a chapter on bones, neighbor Jennings?

We will here give you a tabular view of the several ingredients found by chemists in three different kinds of bones, and "close the account."

Comparative Nutritive value of Hay and Potatoes.

Some experiments made by B. W. Gay, of New London, N. H., the results of which he communicates to the *New England Farmer*, gives a satisfactory comparative view of the nutritive powers of hay and potatoes.

This experiment seems to prove that the nutrition from potatoes has not been rated high enough, probably from the fact that the ratio between the two was based on raw potatoes, while Mr. Gay boiled his. Three pounds of potatoes have been considered equivalent to one of hay. Mr. Gay had a mare that had, during the summer of 1858, done the horse work upon the farm, and brought up a colt. The colt was taken from her at the last of August, after which she worked every day until the last of the winter following. Up to the time of taking off the colt she was quite thin, having lived on grass alone. After that she was fed with one peck of boiled potatoes mixed with a little hay. He found, on weighing the hay, that she ate ten pounds per day. At that time she was in much better flesh than in August.

For a time he fed her on hay alone, which was weighed, and she ate twenty-five pounds of hay per day, and lost flesh at that. Subsequently he fed her on only six quarts of potatoes per day and a little hay as before. Mr. Gay asks, if there is not more nutriment in a pound of potatoes than in a pound of hay—why does not more gain come from ten pounds of good hay and fifteen pounds of potatoes, and lose on twenty-five pounds of hay per day performing the same labor?

A Hint upon Under-draining.

At a Legislative Agricultural meeting held at the State House in Boston, on the 11th inst., the subject of under-draining was discussed.

Mr. Sheld, an Agricultural engineer, being called, said he had drained a lot in Milton where there was only two inches of fall to the quarter of a mile, and the drain worked well. If there is a fall of three inches to the hundred feet in land, a line drain of two inches diameter with forty feet apart, four feet deep, would take off all the water, and he would guarantee it would work satisfactorily. All soils resting on a tenacious subsoil, could be advantageously drained.

CURE FOR SCRATCHES. J. C. Stewart, of Framingham, says in the *New England Farmer*, that he has always succeeded in curing scratches in horses by an application of molasses a few times.

Are the Weevils going?

It is the belief of some that the little, but powerful scourge, the weevil, that for so many years destroyed our wheat crop in Maine, is about departing from us, it is to be hoped, forever.

How this may be we do not know, but we believe it to be true that the ravages of this insect have, for a year or two, been much less than for several years previous. Last year, although a few fields suffered by them, there was in fact comparatively little destroyed by them. Dr. Fitch, the able and industrious Entomologist of the New York Agricultural Society, is of the opinion that this weevil, or wheat midge, as it is more properly called, is about leaving. At the last annual meeting of this society, he read a paper on this subject, of which the *Country Gentleman* gives the following abstract:

"Dr. Fitch has heretofore expressed the opinion, as our readers are already aware, that the Wheat Midge, which has been so destructive throughout a large district of country here at the north in years past, will ere long run its course, so to speak, as was the case, for example, with its predecessor, the Hessian fly. That it will cease to be a formidable enemy to our farmers, so many of whom have given up wheat entirely, owing to its ravages. And that, in course of time, we shall be no more liable to loss of crops from this and other insects, than are the farmers of European countries, who suffer now far less than we do from their invincible and relentless forces."

The ground upon which the foregoing views are based, is this: that when an insect first gains a foothold in new territory, its increase in numbers, unrestrained by the parasites and enemies which would make it their prey in other countries, is surprisingly rapid, enabling it sometimes to spread over and devastate immense regions; but that other insects, kindly ordered in the economy of Nature as counter checks upon its multiplication, will eventually follow in its footsteps, and restrain within certain limits its power of evil. Dr. Fitch illustrated this very pointedly, in the present experience of our California friends are having with that emblem of the pestiferous industry, the honey bee, which crowded out the native bees, and which, having there frequently become almost as abundant as the common house fly, swarming in shops, houses and kitchens, wherever sweets are exposed or there is any thing else on which it can feed. Probably great care was taken to introduce no hives in which the bee moth had a lurking place, and this very precaution has shown that although the latter is exterminated here as a foe that must be driven out, it yet subserves a most useful purpose in our protection, and that until it finds its way to the Pacific coast the bee itself will still continue to be regarded as rather a plague than a blessing.

So much for Dr. Fitch's theory. He was led last year to make extensive observations in the field of wheat in the north-eastern part of this State and the adjoining portion of Vermont. And he found so very few heads of wheat anywhere, in which there was a trace of the midge to be seen, that he considers it to have abated in that region, at least, temporarily.

Fire Proof Cloth.

Many years ago, cloth made from asbestos, which is a fibrous mineral found in the earth generally in the regions of serpentine or steatitic formations, was considered very curious and useful for many purposes such as gloves, purses, &c.

This material does not occur in sufficient quantity to allow of its becoming very extensively used for this purpose, nor would it make a very suitable material for incombustible cloth if it did, it being heavy and not very elastic in its fibre. The ingenuity of chemists and manufacturers have more recently been exerted from time to time to render common linen, cotton or other cloth fire-proof. An Englishman by the name of F. A. Abel, has lately claimed that he has succeeded in rendering cloth incombustible by filling its fibres with soluble glass or silicate of soda, which he does by the following process.

He takes sugar of lead and litharge in the following proportions, viz: Twenty-five pounds of sugar of lead, and fifteen pounds of litharge. These he boils for half an hour in fifty gallons of water. The liquor is then allowed to settle. Then take such quantity of the clear liquor that will suffice to cover the cloth to be operated upon, immerse the cloth in it, then dry it in the open air. Next immerse the cloth for about an hour in a hot solution of silicate of soda, then thoroughly wash in cold water and dry it. An insoluble silicate is thus formed within the pores of the cloth, and as he says, renders it fire-proof. Some of our young experimenters may ask, how do you make silicate of soda? This is made by melting together silica (flint) and soda. Take flint or quartz rock, heat it red-hot and plunge it suddenly in cold water. This disintegrates it so that it may be easily pulverized in an iron mortar, or ground in a mill, equal parts of this pulverized flint and carbonate of soda put in a crucible and melted together makes the soluble glass or silicate of soda.

Provincial Board of Agriculture.

A correspondent of the *Carlton Sentinel* writing from Fredericton, under date of March 12th, says:

The Provincial Board of Agriculture have now been in session for several days, and by their steady sittings seem desirous of overtaking their work with an exemplary activity.

The preparing of the premium list for the Provincial Exhibition to be held next October, has kept them busy for the last two days. We may look forward to this being an exhibition every way worthy of the Province.

At the expiration of the time of the Board was occupied in unfolding the experience in farming matters of the respective members; we understand the discussions were of an interesting character.

Several essays on Agricultural subjects written by some of the members, have been read before the Board, and upon which discussions also arose, eliciting useful information, which we understand will be published in the next annual report of the Board, thus circulating much agricultural knowledge among the members of the Province.

Cutting Soils.

This month has been thought to be the best time for cutting soils. They should be carefully cut and laid away where they will not dry up. Care must also be used to cut healthy ones. Many believe, and we think not without reason, that one cause of the too prevalent decay of apple trees is owing to being engrafted with unhealthy grafts. A neighbor of ours informed us the other day that he found, while cutting soils in his orchard, that many of his trees had suffered by the severity of the winter. It would be well to look out for this. It would be strange indeed if, during some of the cold snaps we have had, some of the young trees were not frozen.

Communications.

For the Maine Farmer.

Sketches of the Devon.

Number 2.

Nearly all the breeders of Devon, both English and American, have held for beauty of form, fineness of bone, lightness of oil, and quality as indicated by the touch, with an absolute disregard to the milking qualities, or rather with a seeming—in some cases an expressed—determination to get rid of the drain of copious milking upon the animal vigor. As soon as their calves are old enough to wean off to the best advantage, say at five or six months, they dry up the cows. To maintain their herds they constantly select calves from fancy cows of their favorite form, preferring, of course, those which approach nearest to their standard of excellence; cows of the straight back, the straight belly; of the smallest bone, and the shortest head; of the tract of barrel form, and the closest; of the softest, finest touch, and fleshed all over; whose very shoulders have always the delightful *double feel*. They are not for milk—in their scale of points the udder, if ever so good, is reckoned but one, while the chest takes fourteen; the shoulder four; the back, loin, and hips, nine; the rump, five; the quarters, six; and the legs, five. They breed, understandingly, away from it, and as the natural consequence, it is, as they say, very rich, but becomes "small by degrees and beautifully less" in each generation. If, for example, at last, reach the point already attained by some of the highest bred Short-Horns, Herefords, and other families of high degree, where offering, if any there be, will have to be put out to nurse.

I have here had reference to the scientific and honorable breeders of Devon in the present fashionable line of flesh. Thoroughly comprehending their business, they obtain the results they seek, and from them may be procured pure blood animals of the highest proof, good in all their standard points.

One of the most noted of the class in the United States, is Mr. C. S. Wainwright, of "The Meadows," on the Hudson river near Rhinebeck, New York. In his now celebrated "Herd" family, Mr. W. having given it special attention, has gained a reputation in the dairy world, and although he has, like Turner of England, a certain contempt for milkers, (I infer from remarks of his that the udder in his scale weighs even less than one point, and that he only let his cows milk for a few days, yet some of his cows exhibit a fair show of milk. In evidence of this I may instance a fine one from his herd now in Augusta, owned by Allen Lumbard, Esq. Only a few days ago, when I was there, he showed me a fine specimen of his milk, and which he had just delivered to a fair milkmaid. I recommended an one wishing for flesh-yielding Devons, elegant in form, fine in touch, of the "double feel," in color, in fact, thoroughly bred to a hair "à la mode," to call upon Mr. Wainwright, who is well known as an enthusiastic devotee in his line.

Now let me say a word or two about another, an unscrupulous class of breeders who have grown up from an abuse of the above.

It is that of charlatans and speculators who, catering to a depraved public taste, which estimates animals by their superficial looks, especially their bulk, make their money out of other men's want of knowledge, and are governed wholly by show in their breeding and their buying for sale. They are a class of color breeders, the largest size, and a pampered condition. Their calves are forced; their yearlings are forced, and so are all they keep, till they mature into stock, and so far as breeding, milking or working is concerned, they are worthless. If excessively high feed has produced a fever and a dry coat, these are the men who restore the property to an oil-filled sponge, and who, when they exhibit these animals before the public, make him his own knowledge, and his own eyes, and when he has purchased, he is left to his own knowledge, and his own eyes, and when he has purchased, he is left to his own knowledge, and his own eyes.

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My mode of raising Winter Wheat.

Mr. Editor:—I wish to give to the public my mode of raising winter wheat. Turn over the soil in June, or by the first of August, to vermic the soil well; as early in August as convenient, sow one bushel of wheat to the acre, cover with a cultivator, then roll with a light roller; let your wheat obtain a luxuriant growth, and the fall feed it off with calves, not sheep or horses; they will feed close, and kill the root. If you have no calves to feed with, take a sylvan and mow the wheat, and then feed it off with calves, and it will do well. If the top is left until the root through the winter, the top and root will both die together; but if the top growth be taken off, the root will live through the winter, and the green when the snow leaves it, ready to spring up in the spring.

Where Cotswold Sheep are.

Mr. Editor:—You can inform the Dehann correspondent that Henry Jordan of Kennebec, York Co., has some of the improved Cotswold sheep, selected from the late importations of G. C. Hitchcock, of New Preston, Conn.; said to be the best sheep in America, and a few of which may be seen in S. L. Goodale's Report of 1859, and were in the *Maine Farmer* some time last season. One of them dropped a lamb this morning weighing 134 lbs.

Respectfully yours, HENRY JORDAN.

Kennebec, March 15th, 1861.

Cow's Superphosphate.

Mr. Editor:—I wish to inquire where I can get Cow's superphosphate of lime, and how much it will need for an acre of corn land, and the probable cost for enough to mature one acre. If you can give the information you will oblige.

Harmony, March 14th, 1861. D. DOR.

For the Maine Farmer.

Mr. Editor:—We believe the article can be purchased of Parker, Gannett & Osgood, Boston. A correspondent of the *Boston Post* states that he applies about 150 lbs. to the acre for corn.—Ed.

Characteristics of the Grey Dorkings.

For the Maine Farmer.

Mr. Editor:—I saw by report of committee on poultry, held at Portland last fall, that they had some objections to Grey Dorkings exhibited, on account of the single comb, remarking they were not pure, &c. Having a few leisure moments to spare, permit me to state just what the true Dorking is, in size, plumage, &c. Having had over forty years experience in most all breeds of domestic gallinaceous and aquatic birds; visited, seen and obtained fancy stock from the best breeders in Europe, I proceed to say that, in Europe, the true Dorking is allowed to be the best of all known varieties of fowls. No fowl can surpass them as a table fowl—being good layers and sitters. The hens will weigh from seven to nine pounds each, at full maturity; they stand low on the legs, which are invariably white, and marked with a few black spots; the neck is straight back, the straight belly; of the smallest bone, and the shortest head; of the tract of barrel form, and the closest; of the softest, finest touch, and fleshed all over; whose very shoulders have always the delightful *double feel*. They are not for milk—in their scale of points the udder, if ever so good, is reckoned but one, while the chest takes fourteen; the shoulder four; the back, loin, and hips, nine; the rump, five; the quarters, six; and the legs, five. They breed, understandingly, away from it, and as the natural consequence, it is, as they say, very rich, but becomes "small by degrees and beautifully less" in each generation. If, for example, at last, reach the point already attained by some of the highest bred Short-Horns, Herefords, and other families of high degree, where offering, if any there be, will have to be put out to nurse.

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